

**From:** Brian Anderson <banderson@Council4.org>  
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Please introduce this into the Labor Comm. testimony for tomorrow's hearing. Thanks.

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### **Labor and Public Employees Committee Testimony –February 18, 2014**

My name is Brian Anderson. I am a legislative representative for Council 4 AFSCME, a union of 32,000 Connecticut public and private employee members.

Council 4 strongly supports H.B. No. 5069 AN ACT CONCERNING LOW WAGE EMPLOYERS. This bill charges large employers a fee for paying their workers a wage so minimal that they qualify for welfare benefits. A principle of our society has been that work should pay. Work should be valued and rewarded. It should not be made into something that forces people into poverty, especially when the owners of such companies get vastly rich at the same time. Walmart is a chief example. Walmart's workforce are among the largest recipients of taxpayer paid aid for nutrition, heating assistance and health care. At the same time, five of the Waltons, the owners of Walmart, are among the ten richest Americans. Surely, the taxpayers don't need to subsidize this kind of poor business practice. The U.S. Census Bureau reported last year that 50% of American families are working poor or in worst circumstances. Last year, the U.S. Federal Reserve reported that the average American family has lost 40% of its wealth since 2007. This bill charges a fair cost to employers who are unfairly profiting at taxpayer and worker expense.

Council 4 supports S.B. No. 56 AN ACT CONCERNING SEVERE MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENT AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE. PTSD is a well documented disease. If someone witnesses a horrific incident, such as a co-worker or school child being murdered, they should be able to take time to get treatment without losing their job or impoverishing their family. This bill provides a common sense and decent response to helping afflicted workers that is based on scientific fact. The bill sets a very high bar and would apply to only a small group of workers.

Council 4 supports S.B. No. 57 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DIRECT DEPOSIT OF WAGES. This bill offers some protection for a small amount of a person's savings or income from attachment by banks, credit card companies or other creditors. It does not release them from their debt, but offers them the chance to stay economically afloat while they pay off their bills. It is a compliment to existing law and safeguards people's money from being accidentally seized.

Council 4 supports S.B. No. 58 AN ACT CONCERNING AN INCREASE IN PENALTIES DUE TO FALSE OR MISLEADING DECLARATIONS, STATEMENTS OR REPRESENTATIONS. This bill increases the penalty for employers who misreport their employment payroll records.

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Council 4 supports S.B. No. 60 AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYEE WORKING CONDITIONS. It is important for the overall health of workers for the state to study working conditions and come up with the best practices to keep workers' safe.

Council 4 supports H.B. No. 5054 AN ACT CONCERNING UNEMPLOYED JOB SEEKERS. This bill offers important protection to unemployed job seekers who may be currently discriminated against because they have been out of work for long periods of time. It is unfair for employers to discriminate against such workers, especially considering the severity of the Great Recession which started in 2007 and continues seven years later.

Council 4 opposes H.B. No. 5067 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISCLOSURE OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STATE BOARD OF LABOR RELATIONS AND THE STATE BOARD OF MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION. We believe that it would be difficult to come up a useful standard for a performance evaluation for arbitrators and mediators due to the unique nature of their job. Council 4 is not aware of any overriding need for such an evaluation system.

Council 4 supports H.B. No. 5068 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMPENSATION OF STATE BOARD OF MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION ARBITRATORS. This bill more fairly compensates the members of the board.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.